

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6845

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, MX

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS-IMPROVED DETECTION OF SPRAYED POPPY FIELDS

1. PHILIP GUSS, PROJECT MANAGER OF SPECTRAL DATA CORPORATION (SDC) CONTRACT GROUP, HAS SUGGESTED THAT MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE (AG) CONSIDER MIXING A DYE VISIBLE TO NAKED EYE WITH HERBICIDE SPRAYED ON POPPY FIELDS. HE SUGGESTS RHODAMINE B RPT RHODAMINE B, WHICH HAS PRONOUNCED RED COLOR EVEN IN LARGE DILUTIONS. PRODUCT MANUFACTURED BY AMERICAN CYANAMID.

2. GUSS STATES THAT THIS DYE IS WIDELY USED BY U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) IN POLLUTION CONTROL STUDIES. FOR OUR PURPOSES, DYE WOULD ASSIST SPRAY PILOTS BY CLEARLY MARKING FIELDS ALREADY SPRAYED, THEREBY ELIMINATING DUPLICATION. IT WOULD ALSO SERVE AS EXCELLENT MARKER FOR VISUAL RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS REPORTING ACTIVITIES OF SPRAY PILOTS. GUSS, WHO HAS CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE WITH BOTH RHODAMINE B AND MULTISPECTRAL PHOTOGRAPHY, DOES NOT BELIEVE DYE WOULD IMPEDE ABILITY TO DETECT POPPIES MULTISPECTRALLY. (FYI: DYE WOULD ALSO MARK ANYONE WORKING IN SPRAYED FIELDS AND TRACES MAY RPT MAY BE PRESENT IN ANY OPIUM HARVESTED FROM SPRAYED FIELDS, PHENOMENA WITH OBVIOUS LAW ENFORCEMENT RAMIFICATIONS.)

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3. IN EVALUATING THIS SUGGESTION, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT IT IS

NOT RISK-FREE. VISUAL RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS, SEEING RED-DYED FIELDS, MUST INTERPRET SIGHTING AS QTE SPRAYED FIELD QTE, NOT RPT NOT QTE KILLED FIELD QTE. PROOF OF QTE KILLED FIELD QTE WOULD REMAIN, AS AT PRESENT, WILTED AND FALLING POPPIES OR ABSENCE OF POPPY SIGNATURE IN SUBSEQUENT MULTISPECTRAL OVER-FLIGHTS. POSSIBLE COUNTER-MEASURES COULD INCLUDE SUBORNATION OF SPRAY PILOTS TO LOAD DYE ONLY, LEADING VISUAL RECONNAIS-SANCE FLIGHTS AND OTHER SPRAY PILOTS TO ASSUME FIELD HAD BEEN SPRAYED WITH HERBICIDE, OR FARMERS THEMSELVES COULD DYE FIELDS IN ATTEMPT TO DECEIVE SPRAY PILOTS. THESE FIELDS WOULD THEN ENJOY A TEMPORARY IMMUNITY UNTIL DYE WORE OFF OR OVER-FLIGHTS INDICATED LIVE POPPIES STILL PRESENT.

4. WE HAVE THREE QUESTIONS THAT CANNOT BE ANSWERED HERE:

(1) WOULD RHODAMINE B IN ANY WAY CHANGE THE EFFECT OF DOW CHEMICAL'S QTE AMINA QTE (MEXICAN EQUIVALENT OF 2-4-D NOW BEING USED BY AG AGAINST POPPIES)?; (2) WOULD RHODAMINE B HAVE ANY ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT?; (3) WOULD RHODAMINE B HAVE ANY ADVERSE EFFECT ON SPRAY EQUIPMENT, PARTICULARLY NOZZLES?

5. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT OBTAIN ANSWERS TO ABOVE THREE QUESTIONS ASAP. IF ANSWERS FAVORABLE, AND IF DEPART-MENT HAS NO OBJECTION, WE WILL BROACH SUBJECT WITH AG'S OFFICE AND SUGGEST LIMITED TEST BY SDC EARLY IN CAMPAIGN. BASED ON TEST RESULTS, AG COULD THEN DECIDE WHETHER TO CONTINUE OR CANCEL THIS TECHNIQUE.

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